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THE NAME "WHITE RUSSIA"[1]

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● 103 THE TERM Belorussia[2] is not well known outside the Slavic world. The area is more frequently referred to as "White Russia." Since 1917, however, use of the latter term has become a source of confusion. The Russians who fought against the Reds in the Civil War of 1918–20 were also called "White Russians." Although in Russian the term *Belorussy*, the ethnic group, and *Belye Russkie*, the political group, are easily distinguishable, there is no way of making the distinction clear in literal translation into English. Many people still cannot understand how an anti-Soviet group succeeded in organizing a republic within the Soviet Union, and why its members are called "white" after they have turned "red." In view of the general confusion, it is perhaps time to suggest that when referring to the ethnic group, the term Belorussian replace the term "White Russian" in our libraries, documents and literature.

The question is: When and why were these lands and people first called "white"?

There is no written evidence that the term White Russia (*Belaja Rus'*, *Alba Russia*) was used before 1382 (Karamzin). At that time, and probably some time before, it was known among the Poles, Livonians, Prussians, and perhaps other Germans (Lamanskij). It designated at least part, if not the whole, of present Belorussia which was at that time a part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

The origin and meaning of the word "white" as applied to this particular part of the country have been the subject of considerable [291] dispute. Some historians believe the term to have originated from the white clothing, smock, leggings, and homespun overcoat, which the people of this region have worn since time immemorial (Herberstein, Leroy-Beaulieu). Others attribute it to the deep snow which covers the country from October to April, and suggest that the people wore white clothes "because their country was called white" (Tatiščev). [142] Still others find the explanation in the light complexions of the people: fair skin, blond hair, and pale blue eyes (Karskij). The theory which connects the name with the white clothing of the people has apparently been officially adopted in the B. S. S. R. At least Kuzma

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[2] The spelling *Byelorussia* is preferred by some translators of Soviet literature into English. The author, however, feels that the spelling *Belorussia* is adequate. The use of *y* as a vowel softener in the middle of a word is more likely to confuse the English speaking reader than to aid in pronunciation.

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103 Kiselev, chairman of the Belorussian delegation to the United Nations, explained the term "White Russia" as having arisen "because of the national costume of the Belorussians" (Associated Press, May 24, 1946). Simple theories are tempting. As a small part of the country was called Black Russia, some ethnographers also have assumed that this name was given to it because its inhabitants "used to wear black caps and black coats" (Zograf).

One could perhaps accept these theories if the terms White Croat and White and Black Huns were not used long before the term White Russian.[3] As neither natural scenery nor clothing and complexion could have accounted for these names, some other explanation must be sought.

The term "black" has been explained by the fact that, according to the Chinese tradition, black was the color of the north. This concept is apparently common to most of the steppe people throughout the continent, and has been the origin of the terms Black Bulgars, Black Huns, Black Ugrians, and so on (Vernadsky). No evidence, however, has ever been presented to show that people were called "white" because of their geographical position. Even if such evidence did exist, it could not possibly explain the origin of White Russia.

103 Moreover, by the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the six-
175 teenth century, the Poles and Lithuanians used to call Muscovite Russia "white," and Belorussia "black": "*Ruś pod kniaziem Moskiewskim Białą Rusią nazwano, a tę, która do Polski należała—Czarną*" (Russia under the Prince of Moscow is called White Russia and that which belonged to Poland is called Black).[4] The Novgorodian chronicler of the fifteenth century describes the Byzantine emperor John Paleologue as having said that "the highest form of Christianity is in White Russia where my brother Vasilij Vasilevič (of Moscow) is the king; eastern monarchs obey him and princes serve him with their lands."[5] Latin documents describe Ivan III of Moscow as *Ioannes, dux albae Russiae* (1472). Tred'jakovskij saw White Russia as located on both banks of the Dnieper, with "Smolensk as its capital." The picture is further confused in the seventeenth century when the term "White Russia" also included the Ukrainian lands of Kiev and Volyn (Potebnja).

103 Besides White Russia, a Red Russia, *Červonaja Rus'*, had been known long before the Reds appeared in Russia. It is present Galicia or Western Ukraine. The name has been explained as deriving from

[3] *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisej*, I; English translation by S. H. Cross, *The Primary Russian Chronicle* (Cambridge, Mass., 1930), pp. 138, 140–41.

[4] Quoted from A. Potebnja, p. 119; see *infra*, Bibliographical Note.

[5] *Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisej*, VI, 152–53; Appendix XIX, p. 117.

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the people's habit of wearing red clothes; they used a dye which they called *červec*. A. Potebnja pointed out, however, that the use of *červec* had been common to all the Ukraine, not only to Galicia. He suggested that the name of the country may have come from the city of Červen, first mentioned in the Chronicle under the year 981. Červen apparently was an important political and economic center of the time, for several settlements along the Bug River were known as the Červenian cities, *gorody červen'scii*. Later, it would seem, the name applied to the whole region. This theory gave G. Il'inskij the idea that the name White Russia might have similar origins. Indeed, a town of Belsk near the ethnic East Slavic border dates from the thirteenth century (1253); it is situated between the rivers Belaja and Beljanka, and is surrounded in the north, east and south by the towns of Białystok, Beloveža and Bela respectively. As the nearby cities gravitating to Červen were named "Červenian," so "it would seem quite possible" that the towns around Belsk "were known as the Belskan cities (*gorody bel'scii*)," and that the name was later extended "to the whole country east of the city." Thus, according to Il'inskij, the term "red" (*červony*) came to designate the Russian people in the Polish, and the term "white" (*bely*) in the Lithuanian "spheres of influence."

The analogy is superficial and not warranted by a bit of historical evidence. Contrary to *gorody červen'scii* known to the Chronicle, no mention of *gorody bel'scii* is found in any document ancient or modern. Neither do we find any reference to Belsk, at one time the possession of the Galič-Volynian princes, as a political and economic center of any importance toward which other cities may have gravitated. G. Il'inskij leaves the term Black Russia without explanation (for no city with the name formed with the radical *čern-* has been known in that region), and no light is thrown upon the question why the Croats and the Serbs, and later Muscovy, were also called "white." Moreover, the analogy is based on a theory which itself is questionable. The adjectives *červenskij* and *červonyj* represent semantic differentiations which exclude substitution of one for another. The same, of course, is true of *belskij* and *belyj*. How such a substitution could have occurred, if it did, in the case of "Červonaja Rus'," A. Potebnja did not care to explain.[6]

[6] Cf. V. Vinogradov, *Russkij jazyk. Grammatičeskoe učenie o slove* (Moscow, 1947), pp. 221–31, and R. Smal-Stocki, *Abris des Ukrainischen Substantivebildung* (Vienna, 1915), p. 28; also his *Značinnja ukraïns'kych prykmetnykiv* (Warsaw, 1926), pp. 66, 74, and 81. We do not know when the name Červonaja Rus' first appeared (Lamanskij). We find it on a map by Fra Mauro (1459–70) translated as *Russia rossa*, and one may suppose that the term was known for some time before. It has been suggested that the country was called *rossa* because of the red hair of its inhabitants (Ripley) and by strangers who used the same term for the color red and the color brown (cf. J. Furrel, *The Nine-*

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103 The origins of the term "White Russia" have also been sought in the religious background of the Slavic peoples. Supporters of this theory remind us that Constantine Porphyrogenitus used the term "white" in order to distinguish the baptized Croats and Serbs from those who remained pagan (Svencicki). But this distinction could not hold for the Belorussians, since all the Slavic tribes from Kiev to Novgorod were Christians in the fourteenth century when the name White Russia first appeared in documents.[7]

Discouraged by the historical evidence, one may seek refuge in the darkness of prehistoric times. According to certain writers, the Russian word for "white" (*belyj*) was derived from the name of an obscure Slavic deity *BELbog*, *BEL-gorjuč-kamen'* (otherwise: *alatyr'*, [794] *aladyr'*, "magic stone").[8] Some traces of the ancient cult of Belbog are indeed found among the Western Slavs. Although little is known about the cult, one can deduce that Belbog was the opposite of Černobog, god of evil. Hence the association of the adjective *belyj* with anything good, pure, light and bright. The Slavic proper name Beloslav, though rare, supposedly expressed the same idea (Miklosich). Some writers have seen a relation between Belbog and Belun, a mythical character in Ukrainian and Belorussian folklore, personifying good fortune (Afanas'ev, Dahl).[9] It is only a step further to the proposition that the country was called "white" because its people worshipped a "white god."

The theory found no supporters at the time it was formulated (1826), but it was revived a century later by a group of Belorussian political exiles in Lithuania (1923). Impressed by the apparent

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teenth Century, XVII (1885), 321–30.) The name *červonaja* may thus have appeared as a Polish or Ukrainian translation from Latin. Indeed, the color symbolism may have nothing to do with it. In 1918–20, the peasant guerillas fighting both the Reds and the Whites and living in the woods, were often called *Zelënaja Rus'*. Cf. "*kondovaja, izbjanaja* Rus' " (A. Blok), "*sermjažnaja* Rus' " (N. Nekrasov), "*brodjačaja* Rus'," "*svjataja* Rus'," etc.

7 At the time of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, "enigmatic northern Croatia . . . reappeared, after a long eclipse, as a young and vigorous pagan State." From the context of Chapter XXXI it appears that Constantine used the term "white" to stress the political independence of those Croats who "have remained without baptism to our day." Cf. Henri Grégoire, "L'origine et le nom des Croates et des Serbes," *Byzantion*, XVII (1944–45), p. 96.

8 M. Makarov, "Neskol'ko slov osobennykh, upotrebljaemykh v raznykh oblastjakh Rossii," *Vestnik Evropy* XXI–XXII (1826), 143–48.

9 Association of the color white with good fortune was also not unknown in the West. Among the different meanings of "white," Webster's *Collegiate Dictionary* lists: (now rare) "fortunate," "auspicious." Cf. F. Portal, *Des couleurs symboliques dans l'antiquité, le moyen-âge et les temps modernes* (Paris, 1837); K. E. Goetz, "Weiss und Schwarz bei den Römern," *Festschrift zum 25 jährigen Stiftungsfest des hist.-philol. Ver., Universität München* (Munich, 1905), pp. 63–73; more relevent though contradictory data in F. B. Gummere, "On the Symbolic Use of the Colors Black and White in Germanic Tradition," *Haverford College Studies*, I (1889), 112–62.

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similarity between Belbog of Slavic and Bäldäg of Teutonic mythology, they suggested that the Belorussians might be really Balts, and not Slavs at all: *Bělbog*—White God; *Bäldäg*—White Day; *Balts*—the Whites; *Mare Balticum*—White Sea; Belorussians—White Russians—*Baltic* Russians.[10] Indeed, if Belorussia and the Baltic are called "white" for the same reason, albeit in different languages, they must belong together. Mythology and linguistics do not always yield to political purposes. The attempt to separate the Belorussians from the Slavic family did not develop further, and was for some time abandoned.

In 1948, however, the idea reappeared in a periodical published by Belorussian emigrants in the American Zone of Germany. An editorial concedes that the Belorussians "borrowed" many important characteristics, both positive and negative, from the Slavs, but urges "not to close our eyes to the fact that the most valuable characteristics of our national psychology are of Baltic origins, such as general reliability, steadiness, tenacity, dynamism, strong resistance to pressure, mental reserve, etc. We must stress our *baltism*, and not only our slavism." The editorial ends by suggesting a "Federation of Baltic peoples," composed of *Belorussia*, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.[11] One can see how a linguistic, though dilettante, interpretation of a name might possibly alter the political map.

Another explanation of the term "White Russia" has been seen in the fact that *běla*, *běl'* were words used for money, perhaps because of the white color of silver. Only scant evidence of this exists before the fifteenth century, when we first find that in Novgorod, 1 bela=1 kuna. The Primary Chronicle mentions *běla*, *běl'* very vaguely. But it appears more frequently in the Lithuanian chronicles (*metriki*), and in documents concerning the Western Dvina region, i.e. the territory more or less connected with present Belorussia.[12] Adjectives often appear as second derivations of a radical which has lost its original meaning, or acquired a special meaning in addition to the original: cf. *zelënyj* (green); *zelen'* (green paint, vegetation); *zelënyj gorod*, *zelënyj šum*, *molodo da zeleno* (garden city, rustle of leaves in a forest, young and immature). A sequence: *belyj* (white)—*bel'* (whiteness, silver, coin)—*belyj* (wealthy, rich) would be quite possible; and *belaja Rus'* would mean "the rich, wealthy part of Russia" which would be historically correct for the era in question.

Unfortunately, there are also serious objections to this interpreta-

[10] *Kryvič* (Kaunas, 1923), IV, 30. Cf. Lith. *báltas; balù, bálti*, "to appear white."
[11] *Bac'kaŭščyna* (Oberhofer, Germany), II, No. 4 (7) (Feb. 15, 1948), 1. Italics mine.
[12] *Belorusskij Arkhiv*, II, 18, 50.

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103 tion. One fails to see how this theory could possibly explain the term "white" as applied to Croats, Huns and Ugrians and, in particular, the term "black" as opposed to "white." Moreover, philologists connect *běla* with Old Slavic *obl*, "round, whole, full," rather than with *belyj*, "white" (*bel'*, *ob'l*, *obel'*, *ob'(e)l'nyi*; cf. Croat: *obal*; Pol.: *obel zupełnie*; Lith.: *ablenas*). Accordingly, *běla*, *běl'* would designate "the full amount" of goods paid in tribute and not "money," and *obel'*, *obel'ny*, "acquired or received in full ownership."[13] Although the latter may have been the case when "full rights of property" were acquired with "money," we do not find "white" or any other derivative of the radical *-běl-* with the meaning "wealthy, rich" in earlier or in later documents; nor is "black" used with the meaning "poor."

It is significant that the terms "white" and "black" in connection with present Belorussia did not appear in literature before the fourteenth century, at which time a large part of the Slavic East was conquered by the Tatars. We know that the Asian hordes consisted of three social groups, the "black," the "white," and the "wild" (Vernadsky). The "white" were the ruling clans, the "black" their dependants, and the "wild" presumably represented the heterogeneous and fluid elements that followed the hordes (Vladimircev). The Mongol possessions were divided into "white lands," i.e. those free from duties and services, and "black lands," or those under tribute (Khlebnikov). With this meaning, the expressions "white" and "black" passed from the Orient to the Slavs, and became embedded in their speech.[14]

[13] A. Vostokov, *Cerkovno-slavjanskij slovar'* (1858–61), VI, 25; I. Sreznevskij, *Materialy dlja slovarja drevne-russkogo jazyka* (St. Petersburg, 1893–1912), I, 217; E. Karskij, *Russkaja Pravda po drevnejšemu spisku* (Leningrad, 1930), pp. 101, 110.

[14] Cf. Chinese: *li*, *li-min*, *li-yüan*, *li-shu*—black, common people,* the masses, the Chinese people; *pai*, *pai-ku*—white, of white bone, of noble birth. Mong.: *Ɣara*—black; *Ɣara ulus*—common folk*, the masses; *Ɣara kümün*—a common man, poor man, tramp; *qaraču*, *qaračud*—lower classes*; *Ɣaralig*, *Ɣarču*, *Ɣaraču*—common folk, the masses*; *Ɣara üge*—common speech, vernacular; *Ɣara šašin*—black faith, shamanism; *Ɣara jasutai*—of black bone, of humble origin; *čaγan jasutai*—of white bone, of noble origin; *caγan albatu*—white folk, freemen, upper classes; *caγan qaγan*, Manch. *cagan han*—the White Tsar, Russian tsar.

Turkic: *qara*—black, common, of lower classes; *qara halq* (Kas. Dsch.)—common folk*; *qara süöq* (Kir.)—black bone, of humble origin; *qara purt* (Kir.)—common folk*; *qara qul*—common workmen, people; *aq*—white; *aq saqal*—an elder, "Stadtälvester"; *aq süöq*—(Kir.) white bone, gentry, nobility; *aq süöqtü*—noble; *aq patsa* (Kir.), *aq patša*—Russian tsar, etc.—cf. also numerous toponymies formed with the word *aq* (white): Aq-Taš, Aq-qaja, Aq-qöi, Aq-mähär, Aq-qöprü, Aq-ova, Aq-abad, Aq-jazy, etc.

*Invariably translated *černʼ* in O. Kovalevskij, *Mongol'sko-russko-francuzskij slovar'* (Kazan, 1846), II, 893; III, 2275; K. Golstunskij, *Mongol'sko-russkij slovar'* (St. Petersburg, 1895), III, 327; D'Ohsson, *Histoire des Mongols depuis Tchingis-Khan jusqu'à Timour Beg ou Tamerlan* (La Haye, 1834–35); B. Vladimircev, *Obščestvennyj stroj*

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In the Slavic East and Byzantium, the expression was known before the Tatar invasion. We have already mentioned White and Black Croats, Huns, Ugrians, Bulgars, Serbs etc., as described by Greek and Russian chroniclers. The Khazars also used the term, and in the same sense. Sarkel, "white house," or "white hostel," was the name given to the residence of the Khazar governor on the Don. Prince Vladimir (990–1015) founded *Belgorod* as a residence for his three hundred concubines who, due to their social status, were not subject to taxation. A number of "white" outposts and towns such as *Belev*, *Belyj*, *Beloe*, *Bel'sk*, *Belostok*, *Beleck*, *Beljany*, *Beloveža* and others, founded at this time and later, began their history as settlements exempt from duties or tribute.

The charter (*jarlyk*) by which the Khans delegated their power to the Russian princes, was called *belčg'* (D'jačenko; cf. Vostokov, Miklosich). In the fourteenth century, white eagle, first mentioned in 1230, and white horse (*pahonja*) became symbols of independent Poland and independent Lithuania respectively.[15] Prince Vasilij Dmitrievič of Moscow divided his subjects into the *dan'ščiki*, i.e. those who paid tribute, and *běl'ščiki*, who were exempt (1392). Afanasij Nikitin, an early Russian traveler, reported that in India all kinds of merchandise were imported *bělo*, "without duties": *vse tovar bělo na beserm'n'skuju zemlju* (1466–72). In the Muscovite State, the word *obelit'*, "to whiten," became a technical term for exemption, and *belaja gramota*, "white charter," was a document legalizing the act of such exemption. Citizens free from taxes and services were distinguished as *belomestcy*, and free peasants as *belosošniki*, or *belopašcy*: cf. *I dade ej Boris belomestnuju gramotu* (And Boris gave her a white resident charter); *Prodal esmi . . . dvor svoj . . . na belom meste ne tjaglom* (I sold . . . my property . . . [located] on a white land exempt from duties.)[16] Non-settled lands owned by

mongolov (Leningrad, 1934), pp. 118, 168; B. Vladimircev, *Sravnitel'naja grammatika mongol'skogo pis'mennogo jazyka i khalkarskogo narečija* (Leningrad, 1929), p. 325; Radlov, *Opyt slovarja tjurkskikh narečij* (St. Petersburg, 1893), I, 86–96; II, 132–61.

15 The white horse has a long pedigree of honor and good luck. It was worshipped among Medes and Persians (cf. the worship of the black bull in Egypt) and also by the old Prussians and German barbarians. Slavic tribes in the west offered a white horse to Svjatovit, god of light; a black horse to Triglav, the evil power. Presents of white horses made to kings and princes had been an old custom in both East and West. Odin rides the white horse. At the feast of St. George in Bavaria, the saint rides a horse of purest white and is followed by six angels (boys) also on white horses. The white horse is a powerful symbol in Berkshire, Wiltshire, Kent, etc.

16 *Belopašcy* were peasants granted exemption from personal duties for having performed outstanding services to the state. The term appeared at the beginning of the seventeenth century, but was abandoned a few decades later. Among others so favored were the descendants of Ivan Susanin, who gave his life for the Tsar Mikhail Romanov (1613). They were *obeleny* in 1619, and were nicknamed *beljane* by the peasantry who did not share this privilege.

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103 Novgorod and Moscow were called *belovod'e*.[17] Lands exempt from tribute, and particularly Church estates, were known as *belye zemli*, and the clergy exempt from personal taxation were called *beloe*, *beleckoe*, *obelennoe*. By extension, men and women living in monasteries before entering the orders, i.e. before giving themselves "in slavery to God," were distinguished as *belec* and *belica*. On the other hand, monks and nuns were known as *černecy*, "black clergy," and wore black gowns and hoods, for they were not free before God in the same sense. Lands under state or city dues and taxes were called *černye*, *černosošnye zemli*, "black lands," and lower classes under personal taxation and services of various kinds were known as "black people": *čern'*, *černoslobodcy*, *černosošniki*.

In general, Russian comprehensive dictionaries agree that *belyj* was the Old Russian "legal term" for those who did not pay taxes or tribute, and *černyj* for "those who bore the whole burden of state taxes and services." Herberstein thought that Ivan IV was called *White Tsar* by the Orientals because he wore a white cap (*belyj klobuk*), in contrast to the black headgear of Asian monarchs. But the whole land of Muscovy already was known as "white" by the time of Ivan III, the monarch who freed it from the Tatar yoke.

In addition to its technical usage, the term *belyj* assumed a figurative meaning in common speech and literature. We often find it as a synonym of "free" in a general sense, *vol'nyj*; and later as a synonym of "noble." Beginning with the sixteenth century, Russian people called their tsar, their religion and country, *belyj* (Dahl). *Belyj svet*, *belsvet* meant "freedom wherever you go" (*svoboda na vse četyre storony*), "the whole earth and mankind" (Dahl). *Belyj* is associated with the idea of purity, moral cleanliness, or lofty ideals. Still more often, the association is with special privilege, neatness, idleness and, somewhat ironically, with "blue blood." The best part of the house is called *belaja polovina*, "white part (half)." *Belobiletnik* is the man with a "white ticket," i.e. exempt from military service. *Beloturka*, "noble grain," is the highest quality of wheat; *belošvejka*, a seamstress able to make very fine clothes; *beloručka*, *beljak*, a man incapable of any kind of manual work, "free to do nothing," a sluggard, a snob.

Most common are expressions *belaja kost'*, "white bone," for people of noble descent, and *černaja kost'*, "black bone," for those of humble origins. One can read of "people of white and black bone" (L. Tolstoy), "black bone students" (Miljukov), and so on. A story prepared by the Soviet officials for use in Berlin schools, and vetoed by American authorities, related the triumph of "the *blackboned*

[17] The southeastern part of Tomsk province along the Chinese border was described by the same term (*Belovodie*) as late as the nineteenth century. Cf. *Opyt oblastnogo velikorusskogo slovarja* (St. Petersburg, 1852), p. 19.

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proletariat over the worthless *whiteboned* bourgeoisie."[18] *White bone*, meaning "free status, noble origin, upper class," is still a current idiom in Central Asia, presumably the country of its origins. Finally, the expression was given respectability by the Ušakov Dictionary, which defines it in the following terms: "(ironic.) noble, 'lordly' breed."[19]

The West Russian princes, allied with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, did not pay tribute to the Tatars, and this was the reason why their country was called white (Dragomanov). Indeed, it is believed that the name "white" was "first given by the Poles to all the Lithuanian possessions torn from the Muscovites" and thus "rescued from the Tatar yoke" (Larned).

The theory is very plausible. But as it stands it does not explain why the western part of White Russia, i.e. the farthest removed from the Tatars, was called "black." Lamanskij observed that lands and people were as overloaded with taxes and services in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as they were in Muscovy, and therefore "white, to them could mean anything but free." Moreover, we know that after the Tatars were defeated in the east, the whole of White Russia became "black" at least from the point of view of the Poles (Potebnja).

The contradictions, however, disappear when the situation is

[18] Italics mine. The story was entitled "How Lenin and the Tsar Divided the Russian People Between Themselves" (Associated Press, Dec. 1, 1946).

[19] D. Ušakov, and others. *Tolkovyj slovar' russkogo jazyka* (Moscow, 1934–41), I, 122. This usage was perhaps responsible for the fact that political terms such as "white army," "white guards," "white emigrants," "white rabble," "white idea," "white front" (*belogvardejcy, belomigranty, belaja svoloč', belaja idrja, belaja mečta*) and the like, have become so quickly embedded in the vernaculars, although their origin must be sought in French, and not Russian history.

The search could be extended to other Slavic, and non-Slavic idioms, but this would lead far beyond the scope of the present study. Let it suffice to say that association of the color white with ideas of purity, nobleness, freedom and good, is not limited to the Slavs. Among the Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian and Church Slavonic dictionaries consulted, the following are of interest: E. Berneker, *Slavisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg, 1908–13); V. Dahl, *Tolkovyj slovar' živogo velikorusskogo jazyka* (2nd ed.; St. Petersburg-Moscow, 1912), Vols. I–IV; G. D'jačenko, *Polnyj Cerkovno-slavjanskij slovar'* (Moscow, 1900); A. Duvernois, *Materialy dlja slovarja drevne-russkogo jazyka* (Moscow, 1894); P. Kalajdovič, *Opyt slovarja russkikh sinonimov* (Moscow, 1818), Vol. I; F. Miklosich, *Lexicon Palaeoslovenico-Graeco-Latinum* (1865–68) and *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der slavischen Sprachen* (Vienna, 1886); A. Preobraženskij, *Etimologičeskij slovar' russkogo jazyka* (Moscow, 1910–16); Akademija Nauk, *Slovar' cerkovno-slavjanskogo i russkogo jazyka* (St. Petersburg, 1847), Vols. I–IV; A. Sokolov, *Obščij cerkovno-slavjano-rossijskij slovar'* (St. Petersburg, 1854), Vols. I–II; I. Sreznevskij, *Materialy dlja slovarja drevne-russkogo jazyka po pis'mennym pamjatnikam* (St. Petersburg, 1893–1912), Vols. I–III; D. Ušakov and others, *Tolkovyj slovar' russkogo jazyka* (Moscow, 1934–41), Vols. I–IV; A. Vostokov, *Cerkovno-slavjanskij slovar'* (St. Petersburg, 1858–61), Vols. I–II.

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103 studied in the light of social ideas and structure of that time. People dwelling on the "white lands" were not free in the sense freedom was understood several centuries later. Sometimes they were burdened with taxes and services heavier than the people working on "black lands." The distinction, however, referred not to the nature or amount of duties, but to whom the duties were rendered. Men who sweated for their lord shared in his freedom. Together with him, they formed that little world in itself which could be a principality, an estate, or simply a large household, identical with the Roman *familia* in many respects. As long as the master of their world was also his own master, no matter how rude and tough he might be, his personal position and the status of his possessions could be termed "white." But if his freedom and power were impaired, or restricted by an intruder, and he had to collect duties from his lands for payment to some outside authority, his position and the legal status of his lands were blackened. The outside authority may be a conqueror, the state, or the city. In other words, "black" was used to describe lands and people under taxes and services *to any power other than of patrimonial origin*. Hence *čern'* in the cities of Novgorod and Pskov; and *černye zemli* in the principalities incorporated into the Muscovite State as distinguished from proper patrimonies of the Muscovite princes.

While all of Russia was "blackened" by the Tatar yoke, the West Russian principalities allied with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania managed to preserve their independence, paying no tribute to either the Tatars or the Lithuanians. Those principalities constituted "White Russia." On the other hand, Russian lands farther west which passed over to the Lithuanian overlords, became known as "Black Russia." By the time Moscow threw off the Tatar yoke and was "white" again, all the Russian lands in the west had fallen under the sway of the Lithuanian Russian State which imposed direct taxes and services upon them. Thus the transition of the whole country from white to black. The name "White Russia" as referring to the Grand Duchy disappeared from documents and literature.

This name was remembered by Moscow in 1667, when the need arose to distinguish the lands ceded by the king of Poland to Russia from the former Muscovite possessions (Treaty of Andrusovo). Tsar Aleksej ordered them to be called *Belaja Rus'*, for they were freed by him from obligations to a "foreign power." But from the point of view of the native, their lands were not "whitened," since one outside authority (Moscow) simply replaced the other (Vilno). The name did not stick. With the partition of Poland, it was revived (1772–95). Catherine II imitated Tsar Aleksej. Provinces "torn away from Russia and returned" were named *Belorussia*, and their

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administration, the *Belorussian* General Government. After the Polish uprising of 1831, fearing that separatist tendencies might develop in the Lithuanian and Belorussian *gubernii*, the Russian government decided to rename the whole region *West Russia;* and in 1839, the vernaculars were prohibited in churches and schools. Banned from administration, however, "Belorussian" appeared in literature as an ethnographical term. It was also used in Church records to distinguish Russians of Roman Catholic faith from Catholic Poles on the one hand, and from Orthodox Russians on the other.

By the end of the century, the term Belorussian won general recognition in both Russia and Poland. It was translated into foreign languages as "White Russian," and now as "White Ruthenian." To a well-informed European or American there was no difference in these terms. "Ruthenians" is a latinization of the Old Slavic *Rusiny*, first transliterated *Russinen* in the treaty between Prince Mstislav of Smolensk and the City of Riga in 1229. Latin documents used this term indiscriminately for the Grand Duke of Lithuania and the Grand Duke of Moscow: *Rex Litvinorum Ruthenorumque*, and, *Ioannes IV, Rex Ruthenorum*. But well informed Europeans and Americans were few indeed, and it seemed to Belorussian nationalists quite possible that the West might be persuaded to believe that the Ruthenian and Russian were two different races. Thus "White Ruthenian" delegations appeared in the European capitals after the Soviet Revolution, and a memorandum was submitted to the Paris Peace Conference on behalf of the "White Ruthenian Democratic Republic." A group of political emigrants in the United States formed a "White Ruthenian" American National Association in Chicago, Ill., and for some reason changed it later to "White Russian."

Both terms White Ruthenian and White Russian, however, were too close to Russian. This, in the opinion of some Belorussian writers, might seriously hamper the independent development of Belorussian new national self-consciousness and culture. In ancient times, the Krivići were one of the tribes dwelling on the territory of present Belorussia. Their name sounded far enough from anything Russian, and attempts have been made to substitute the terms *Kryvija*, *Kryvići* and *Kryvian* for "Belorussia," "Belorussians," and "Belorussian" respectively. In 1928, this usage was prohibited in Soviet Belorussia, but it continued sporadically in Western Belorussia (Poland) and abroad. The term *Kryvija*, however, was not generally accepted by the Belorussian separatists. A new attempt to introduce it in literature is being made by a group of political emigrants in Germany (American Zone)

No uniformity in international Belorussian terminology has been

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103 thus far achieved. The situation became still more complicated with World War II, when the term Belorussia (spelled Byelorussia) began to prevail. In this widespread confusion, the terms "White Russian" and "White Ruthenian" must be, it seems to us, discarded. We do not translate such proper names as Spitzbergen, Lichtenstein, Ukraine, Yugoslavia or Argentina, but have embedded them into English. There is no special reason why we should translate Belorussia.

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